

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing on Proposed FY 23 Adjustments for Human Services Agencies

Wednesday 2/23/2022

IN SUPPORT

My name is Jessamine Sargent and currently I am a Quality Support Manager and a Developmental Specialist for SARAH Inc. KIDSTEPS Birth to Three Program.

I am testifying in favor of increasing funding for Birth to Three Programs by adding Birth to Three funding into this bill.

I am taking this position on behalf of all Birth to Three families and Birth to Three programs. I have had the honor of seeing the direct impact of Birth to Three services, being provided for families and caregivers in their natural environments over the past 20 years. I wish I could share all the wonderful stories with you so that you could read firsthand the reality of what happens on a day-to-day basis, as we say in 'a day in the life of Birth to Three'. However, that would be a very long written testimony, therefore, I am hoping there are families in person during the testimony who will share personal stories with you.

The first fact I would like to share with you is that investing in early intervention services is cost effective, as I am sure you are aware, in the long run even during a budget crisis. The short-term costs should outweigh the long-term costs of possible future special education services, social services, etc. (James J. Heckman). The second fact is that for children birth to five years old is a critical time for brain development. The brain develops rapidly during these years and education during this time through utilizing of coaching with caregivers increases positive development, we see this on a day-to-day basis with our families and caregivers we work with. A caregiver who can develop a sense of their child's interests, their challenges, and their strengths, while engaging their child, and helping them learn during their natural daily activities is a goal for all our families. As a Birth to Three provider, we support and coach families so that they can reflect, analyze, and plan for how best to support their child with their growth and development at their current age and developmental level and in the future.

For five years flat funding has caused instability in CT Birth to Three Programs! We will not be able to continue to support our families in the same capacity if funding is not increased.

Please support Birth to Three.

Thank you for your time.

Jessamine E. Sargent

SARAH Inc. KIDSTEPS

jsargent@sarah-inc.org

401-525-8590